

June - July 2022

In This Issue:

- From the Executive Director: Mick Weltman
- ACI Scholar: Tania Huerta Chagoyan, Aurora University
- ACI Board of Trustees Appoints April Arnold as ACI Executive Director
- McGraw Foundation Provides \$100,000 Grant to ACI
- Kassandra Olea Joins ACI Board of Trustees
- Nine Member Presidents Attend Midwest Roundtable on Talent June 26-28
- Knox College Team to Create, Display Unique Digital Art Project at Chicago's 150 Media Stream
- Three Presidents Departing ACI-Member Colleges and Universities
- ACI's Spring Conference, Held Virtually, Draws Significant Interest
- From ACI Corporate Partner Quest Food Management Services: Instability and the Present-Day Campus
- Upcoming Events
- Let's Continue Progress to Help Underserved Students Earn College Degrees

From the Executive Director



Dear ACI Presidents, Corporate Trustees, Colleagues and Friends,

Thanks for your great support and trust in me to lead this wonderful organization, Associated Colleges of Illinois, for the past eight years of its 70-year history. I'm proud that we achieved a lot, but there's much more to do. With your help, we've enriched the lives of students, our 26 colleges and universities, and our colleagues.

I've always bragged to friends that I had the perfect job: Doing what I love, working with outstanding people and organizations, making a small difference in the world—and actually getting paid to do it.

I'm grateful for the great group of presidents I was fortunate enough to work with at ACI's member colleges and universities, the ACI corporate trustees who supported me through good times and challenging times, the many funders who made this all possible, my colleagues in the ACI office who deserve the true credit for what we've achieved, and to the other ACI friends who put up with my crazy ideas. You all will be missed.

I'm very excited to share that my successor, April Arnold, will begin July 5. She brings a great background, plus the skills and drive to build on the good work ACI is currently doing and is still to be done. There is a story in this issue of the *ACI Reporter* with more about April's background.

I will be moving to Portland, Maine (and mostly retiring) but am always happy to support ACI in any way I can. *Please* reach out when I can help move ACI towards meeting its mission. And, please contact me if you're ever up that way.

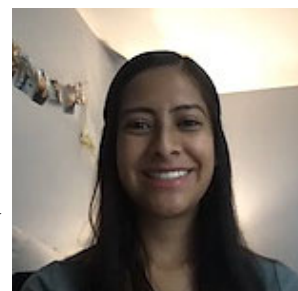
Thank you for a truly special eight years.

Mick Weltman
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ACI Scholars

Tania Huerta Chagoyan
Aurora University
ACI General Scholarship

Tania Huerta Chagoyan of Streamwood, Illinois, remembers the nurses who helped her through health-related issues when she was growing up. That is one of the reasons that Huerta Chagoyan chose nursing as her major at nearby [Aurora University](#). "I want to help the kids that were like me growing up having a lot of health issues," she says.



A bilingual student in Spanish and English, Huerta Chagoyan says she also chose Aurora because of its small classes and close-knit community. Plus, the university's nursing program has a good reputation, with a high student passing rate on the National Council Licensure Examination, the standard for nursing licensure.

[Read more of Tania's story.](#)

ACI News

ACI Board of Trustees Appoints April Arnold as ACI Executive Director
New exec brings fundraising and leadership experience to ACI role

The Board of Trustees of Associated Colleges of Illinois (ACI) appointed [April Arnold](#), CFRE, as ACI executive director, succeeding Mick Weltman, who will retire after leading the organization for nearly eight years. Arnold brings



substantial experience as a leader and fundraiser in higher education institutions and nonprofit organizations. She begins her leadership role with ACI July 5.

Currently, Arnold is an independent consultant who has worked with organizations such as Kidsmatter, Naperville, Illinois, and Futures Fundamentals, Chicago.

Arnold, who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Theater Arts from Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, said she is honored to be selected as ACI's next executive director. "My passion has always been to support youth," she said. "As a first-generation college student, I understand what degree completion means not only for student success, but also for the success of the family. My own experience would have been quite different without encouragement and guidance from others. To me, the secret sauce of ACI is in what we can do to augment resources, provide connections, and foster opportunities to support the colleges and universities served."

Arnold's experience as a fundraiser was key in her selection as executive director, said Lyn Bulman, chair of the ACI Board of Trustees. "The breadth of her not-for-profit experience, and particularly her time in higher education, was also an attraction," she commented. "In addition to her previous roles, everyone who met April as part of the selection process felt that she would be a good fit with ACI's culture. I am confident that April Arnold will be a worthy successor and a strong ambassador for ACI's mission."

Arnold's previous work experience includes serving as operations director for Sounds Good Choir, NFP, Downers Grove, Illinois, from 2019 to 2022. In that role, she established procedures and operations for the startup organization that serves hundreds of older adults in the Chicago area through community-based choirs. Her success included annual fundraising campaigns that increased at least 9 percent each year.

In higher education roles, she was director of corporate and foundation relations at Northern Illinois University (NIU) from 2014 to 2018. At NIU, she developed new giving policies, raised \$2.5 million towards scholarship and program support, and secured one of the largest seven-figure gifts to the foundation. From 2007 to 2013, Arnold worked at [Elmhurst University](#), Elmhurst, Illinois, an ACI member, where she was director of institutional giving and served in other senior development roles. Among her achievements were generating more than \$1 million in new gifts to support capital, endowed and annual initiatives, raising \$1.7 million toward a department goal of \$3 million, organizing a signature fundraising event that netted more than \$300,000 annually and establishing corporate alumni gatherings to build engagement.

In addition, Arnold held senior-level development and marketing roles with several nonprofit organizations, including Elmhurst Art Museum; Museum Explorer, Inc., North Riverside, Illinois, where she was also co-founder; DuPage Children's Museum, Naperville; plus Arts Alliance Illinois, Classic Digital, Inc., and Chicago Symphony Orchestra, all in Chicago.

Arnold became a Certified Fund-Raising Executive (CFRE) in March 2020. She is also active in community service activities. In 2019, she was named Outstanding Volunteer for West Suburban Philanthropic Network, Wheaton. Since 2019, she has served on the DuPage Board of Directors for Metropolitan Family Services, Wheaton, and is development and stewardship chair. She previously served on the board for Family Shelter Service, Wheaton, and served on strategic planning committees for DuPage Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and DuPage Arts for All.

Arnold and her family reside in suburban Chicago.

McGraw Foundation Provides \$100,000 Grant to ACI *Funds are distributed to ACI students with emergency needs*

[The McGraw Foundation](#), based in Dundee, Illinois, awarded \$100,000 to ACI for distribution this coming academic year to member colleges and universities to assist students with financial emergencies. [McGraw Foundation Student Emergency Assistance Fund grants](#) can be awarded by financial aid officers throughout the year, whenever students present unanticipated financial hardships, including emergency medical expenses, loss of housing or sudden loss of a job.

McGRAW FOUNDATION

The McGraw Foundation is a longtime partner with ACI, according to Mick Weltman, ACI executive director. The foundation has awarded nearly \$2.5 million to ACI since 1974, all of which has been distributed to members, and then to students, he added. \$5,000 more was awarded this year than in previous years.

The McGraw Foundation is a private foundation "whose mission is to provide financial assistance for educational and charitable purposes in furtherance of the public good and promoting the well-being of all humanity," according to its website. Established in 1948, and funded by contributions from Max McGraw and several family members and friends, McGraw Foundation has supported a variety of educational and charitable activities for 75 years. The foundation provides grants to several nonprofit causes, with a primary emphasis on education at all levels.

Kassandra Olea Joins ACI Board of Trustees



Kassandra Olea, employee benefits practice lead, [USI Insurance Services](#), joined the [ACI Board of Trustees](#) this month following her election by the ACI Executive Committee.

Olea joined USI Insurance Services in February 2020, and in her current role, she focuses on education. She began her career in the insurance industry in 2011. Since then she worked in the marketing department for a Fortune 500 insurance carrier, where she spent eight years. During that time, she led large-scale, national enrollment logistics. In 2018, Olea transitioned into the broker space, where she directed worksite benefits and technology for clients at a regional brokerage focused on higher education.

Olea serves on the fundraising committee for United Way and is a preferred broker for the Illinois Network of Charter Schools. She has also served on the Young Professionals Board for the After School All-Stars, Chicago.

ACI's board consists of 35 corporate members, plus the presidents of the organization's 26 member colleges and universities.

Seven Member Presidents Attend Midwest Roundtable on Talent June 26-28

ACI was well represented at the annual [Midwest Roundtable on Talent](#), June 26-28, at the Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, Michigan. Seven ACI-member presidents planned to attend the event, a "one-of-a-kind gathering dedicated to

cross-sector dialog and collaboration to advance student outcomes," according to the event website. ACI is also a regional partner of the Midwest Roundtable, hosted and organized by the Michigan Colleges Alliance.

This year's meeting brought together more than 70 college and university presidents, along with as many corporate leaders, from 27 states. The purpose of the gathering was to spark innovation, problem-solving and partnerships as Midwest private colleges and universities prepare graduates to succeed in the 21st century workplace.

ACI-member presidents attending were Gene C. Crume, Jr., [Judson University](#); Daniel C. Dobbins, [McKendree University](#); Eric W. Fulcomer, [Rockford University](#); Arvid C. Johnson, [University of St. Francis](#); Brian McGee, [Quincy University](#); Glenna G. Temple, [Dominican University](#); and John W. Williams, [Principia College](#).



Knox College Team to Create, Display Unique Digital Art Project at Chicago's 150 Media Stream

Knox repeats as winner of 150 Media Stream/ACI Digital Arts Contest

A team of three students from [Knox College](#), Galesburg, Illinois, submitted a successful proposal in the second 150 Media Stream/ACI Digital Arts Contest. The Knox College team entry focuses on digital relationships and human connectivity. Their digital art project is expected to debut in May 2023 at the [150 Media Stream](#) video wall in Chicago, according to [Yuge Zhou](#), 150 Media Stream curator.

The Knox College team members are James Adamson, Elk Ridge, Utah, a sophomore majoring in computer science and studio art; Tristan Blus, North Barrington, Illinois, a senior majoring in computer science; and Ingrid Wasmer, Chicago, a senior majoring in studio art and psychology. Tim Stedman, Knox College assistant professor of art, professor of practice, will serve as faculty advisor. 150 Media Stream will provide contest cash awards of \$1,500 each to the students and faculty advisor.



The Knox College proposal was the lone entry in this year's contest, open to student teams at all 26 ACI-member colleges and universities. In 2020, a Knox College team of Patrick Steppan and Odessa Sagli, with Stedman as faculty advisor, submitted the winning entry, "[Shrouded in Smoke](#)," left image. It debuted at 150 Media Stream in October 2020.

Located at 150 N. Riverside, Chicago, 150 Media Stream is the only structure of its kind dedicated to showcasing local artists alongside renowned and emerging artists from around the world. The digital art structure consists of 89 LED blades that stretch 150 feet long and rise

22 feet high, igniting into light, color and movement. The contest's purpose was to stimulate students' interest in digital media, to practice their skills in creating digital art, to acquire experience in producing art in public spaces and to provide a prestige platform to showcase their work.

In their entry this year, the students wrote that their concept is about relationships. "With recent limits on in-person physical contact, the internet has been our main source of facilitating connection with each other," they wrote. "In a time when the world is opening back up to more face-to-face interaction, we wonder how virtual spaces have influenced our relationships with each other and with ourselves."

"We demonstrate this relationship between humans and these virtual spaces by applying physicality to a digital medium," they continued. "We are using physical animation altered in a digital space in tandem with a rooting algorithm symbolizing the growth of these spaces. The movements that reach across the gaps between the 89 blades exemplify our desire to connect despite physical separation. Sporadic movements, confined to smaller areas of the composition, highlight the limits of this virtual connection. Ultimately, these visualizations explore how the internet has expanded human connectivity, as well as the needs that can't be fulfilled through digital connection."

Three Presidents Departing ACI-Member Colleges and Universities

Two presidents of ACI-member colleges and universities have left their leadership roles, and a third will leave later this year.

Presidents who left this spring are Kurt D. Dykstra, Trinity Christian College, and Troy D. Hammond, North Central College. Dykstra, left, who was president at Trinity Christian College for seven years, left in May to become president and chief executive officer of Independent Colleges of Indiana, Indianapolis, beginning in July. The board named Trinity Christian's provost, Aaron J. Kuecker, as interim president while a search for a permanent successor is underway, [the college reported](#).



Hammond, center, resigned this month after 10 years as president at North Central College and will become an advisor to the college's board of trustees. The board is expected to name an interim president soon, who will serve while a search is underway for a permanent successor, according to a [college news release](#).

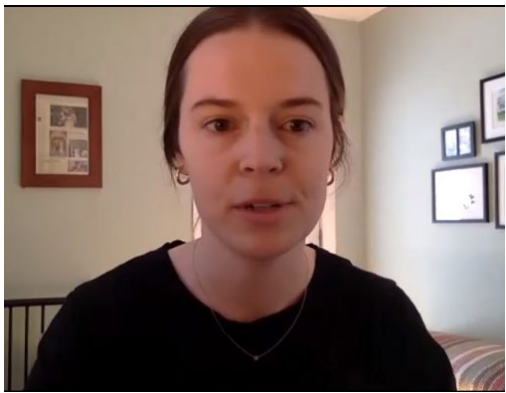
Eric W. Fulcomer, right, president of Rockford University, will step down in December, according to [Rockford news release](#), to become president of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Madison. Fulcomer has worked at Rockford more than nine years, first as vice president for enrollment management and then as president.

ACI's Spring Conference, Held Virtually, Draws Significant Interest

[ACI's Spring Professional Development Conference](#), held via Zoom June 1-2, drew 498 session registrations and 195 unique individuals, which means most registrants signed up for two or three sessions each.

The most registered session was "It's Time to Get on TikTok and Reels: Why and How," led by freelancer Kirby Stockwell, below left, formerly of [Augustana College](#). It drew 71 registrants, according to Daisy Gomez, ACI director, events and scholarships.

The virtual conference featured the traditional four tracks in advancement, finance, public relations and marketing, and student engagement. Each track offered three 45-minute sessions. Presenting speakers represented ACI's network of member institutions, corporate trustees, corporate partners, staff members and affiliated organizations.



The day of the event resulted in a 69 percent attendance rate, similar to the previous conference. Conference recordings and presentations were sent to each registrant, regardless of attendance, Gomez said. The recordings were viewed 137 times in the first 5 days of being available, a 25 percent viewing increase compared to the fall conference, she added.

Ninety-six percent of ACI-member institutions took advantage of the virtual conference opportunity. Highly engaged institutions included [Aurora University](#), Aurora, Illinois, and [Saint Xavier University](#), Chicago, each with 20 staff and faculty members registered. ACI is excited to continue to provide professional development opportunities and is planning an in-person conference tentatively scheduled for Nov. 11, Gomez added.

Did You Know?

From ACI Corporate Partner Quest Food Management Services

Instability and the Present-Day Campus

 [Quest Food Management Services](#) is pleased to be a new partner with Associated Colleges of Illinois in 2022. Quest was founded in 1985 and has grown to provide custom business and financial solutions, contracted foodservice and consulting services to over 100 partners in four states.

Quest believes that food is about more than simple sustenance. The right dining program creates structure and builds community — enhancing the culture by offering students, faculty and staff a way to connect and collaborate by breaking bread together. That’s why it’s essential to find the food service partner that supports your mission and values, and creates customized programming for your institution.

[Read more.](#)

For more information, contact:

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Senior Vice President of Business Development
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312-339-3747

Upcoming Events

- **Monday, July 4:** Independence Day (ACI office closed)
- **Thursday, July 14:** ACI Board of Trustees, 4 p.m., via Zoom

Give to ACI to Help Underserved Students Earn College Degrees

ACI is grateful for your gifts to help us raise funds for scholarships, emergency financial aid through the McGraw Foundation Student Emergency Assistance Fund and programs to support Illinois college students. Our mission is to provide financial support and guidance to low-income and first-generation students attending [ACI-member schools](#). Through peer mentoring, scholarship and emergency financial aid support, college-to-career programs and more, ACI has bridged the gap to help students succeed in college and beyond.



Want to help a deserving college student? Please donate online via [ACI’s website](#) or simply text ACI to 44321 to contribute. To see the impact of your generosity, watch some of the [student scholarship recipients tell their stories](#). Thanks so much for supporting ACI, our members and their students.



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Illinois Wesleyan University - Judson University - Knox College - Lewis University - McKendree University
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Saint Xavier University - Trinity Christian College - University of St. Francis - Wheaton College

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